



ANNUAL REPORT

2023

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The trustees present their report and the unaudited financial statements of the charity for the year to 31st March 2023.

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Great Open Door

www.greatopendoor.org.uk

No. 1169471

Charity

VISION AND VALUES

Offering schools exceptional resources that capture children's imaginations.

Our Vision: who we are

Our vision is to 'raise the next generation to know their God.' This is fulfilled by teaching the Christian faith and Christian moral values to primary school children in Harlow Essex and the surrounding area in engaging and relevant ways so that they can make an informed choice about belief in God and following His Son, Jesus Christ. We also seek to support students in their spiritual, social and moral development.

Our Values: who we aim to be

Great Open Door aims to offer schools exceptional resources, which capture children's imaginations, by combining the following Values

Passion and Conviction: which communicates

Creativity and Originality: which is memorable

Continuous Improvement: which increases our skills and develops the team's faith

Prayerfulness: which continually acknowledges that this is the Lord's work

Diligence: which demonstrates professionalism and the desire to serve

Partnering: which recognises the importance of fostering good working relationships with schools, churches, and the local community.

Objects of the Charity

To advance the Christian faith among young people and families, in schools and groups, and in conjunction with the churches in Harlow Essex and the surrounding area.

Public Benefit Statement

The Trustees have considered the Charity Commission's guidance on public benefit and believe that their activities meet the public benefit guidance by teaching Christian values and the Christian faith to school children in every local school we are invited into and by encouraging greater partnerships between schools and churches. We assist schools by reinforcing their values, aligning programmes with the national curriculum and by helping them to meet their

requirements for collective acts of worship. We provide this service regularly and without charge in schools and in the community. There are no restrictions on children and young people having access to this service.

WHAT WE ACHIEVED

The trustees were thankful and relieved that the year under review witnessed the end of lockdown restrictions, with schools reopening their doors to outside visitors. And the Trustees were delighted that schools were again eager to book Great Open Door's live assemblies from the start of Summer term 2022. There have been so many unknowns and uncertainties during the Covid pandemic, so there were no guarantees that schools would welcome the Great Open Door team and their Christian message post this massive educational disruption. The Trustees are confident that the ministry can move forward following this God given confirmation that it will continue to serve our local schools.

The month of May 2022 saw the team roll out our assembly programme on the theme of "Resilience", a key value for most schools. This programme followed the progress of a switched off, reluctant waitress as she learns throughout the assembly (from puppet and dramatic sketches, including Robert the Bruce, and the Christian message of hope and perseverance) that she is gifted and loved and that God has good plans for her. She finally decides that she won't give up but will keep on trying to do her best. It was also good to be able to acknowledge the resilience and faith that the late Queen showed throughout her reign.

The team had to show resilience themselves as they prepared to deliver this assembly programme, whether from frequently changing booking dates as schools became more open and had to juggle more visitors/activities, or from the challenges of working out how to operate the spider and its web within Robert the Bruce's cave!

The resilience assembly has been wonderfully received. It has been greatly appreciated by teachers as it ties in with school values. At one school the teachers said "the assembly was very entertaining with an excellent message. The short snappy relatable skits kept the children engaged". A teacher at another school observed that they would probably lose some maths lesson after play as the children were buzzing in the playground about the assembly and it was such a valuable learning opportunity. Pupil feedback indicated a wide variety of favourite content and it's probably fair to say that the assembly contained something for everyone. Pupils have specifically said "the assembly was amazing, really unique, funny, motivating & the best assembly ever!" Even scoring it 10 million out of 10!

The Great Open Door Christmas workshop programme was offered to 6 schools in December 2022. The workshop looked at Christmas traditions and identifies what is festive fluff, that can get in the way of celebrating the birth of Jesus, and what really relates, and is important to, the nativity story. A scarlet fever

outbreak and double bookings of school halls meant only one session was able to be delivered. To avoid a recurrent of this, dates for the workshops will be booked in November 2023.

The next assembly programme, “Turning Worries into Prayers” was delivered into schools from the end of January 2023. This assembly recognises the importance of sharing worries rather than carrying them as secret burdens and explains that Christians can share their worries and concerns with Jesus through prayer. Lively dramas, including Shrek and the Talking Donkey who remain incredibly popular, held the children’s attention as did practical applications of these principles. Pupil feedback confirms they understand the message and enjoy the variety of content in the assembly.

In the year under review the Great Open Door made 24 school visits delivering two assembly programmes and a Christmas workshop.

The Trustees believe there has never been a more important time to share God’s message of hope and love with the next generation and are seeking to extend the reach of the ministry. We are planning to offer another three schools regular assembly visits and are delighted that two new schools, Jerounds and Hatfield Broad Oak, have already booked assemblies next year.

To God be the Glory!

Volunteers

The ministry continues to be blessed with a wonderful team of committed and enthusiastic volunteers who have worked very hard delivering assemblies. At 31 March 2023 the volunteers were: Agnes Amofa, Pam Harknett, Angela Hodgson, Andy Walker and Paul Welfare ‘The Sound Man’ who, together with Jo Hargrave, the paid part time Schools Work Team Leader, comprise the assembly team going into schools. The Trustees are thankful for these amazing volunteers, without which the ministry could not function.

The Trustees are thankful for the 6 years of faithful dedicated service that David Swindale gave to the ministry and wish him and Susan God’s blessing as they settle into their new home in Derbyshire. While David had many skills he is particularly remembered as the ‘Roady’ par excellence, and we miss him and Susan’s large 4 by 4 SUV.

The Trustees are delighted that Agnes Amofa has joined the team, bringing her gifting and musical talents and broad smile into the schools and adding to our diversity as the first black member of the team.

Increased efforts have been made in the current year to raise awareness within the churches of opportunities to volunteer with Great Open Door and serve within our schools. Following the visit to Lighthouse Church in February 2023 Tina Liu, applied to volunteer with Great Open Door. She has recently joined the assembly team, bringing the number of team members to seven.

We conclude the year intentionally praying for another male volunteer to join the ministry. As well as helping to maintain a good gender balance it would be particularly timely to have another 'Roady' on the team!

Trustees

The Trustees are thankful for the years of faithful, enthusiastic service Tim West gave to the ministry, firstly as a headteacher warmly welcoming us into his school, then joining Great Open Door as a team member, then becoming the School Work Team Leader and finally acting as a trustee. Tim resigned on 20th April 2022 to take up his first pastorate at Forest Gate Baptist Church and we wish him and his family God's blessing in his new role.

The trustees were delighted to appoint Miss Sarah Mitchell and Mrs Davina Smith as trustees on 29 July 2022. Sarah has been an avid supporter of Great Open Door over many years and brings a wealth of experience of school leadership to the ministry. Sarah has agreed to be the Safeguarding Trustee as she holds the level 3 safeguarding qualification and is one of the Designated Safeguarding Leads at her place of employment. Sarah has also agreed to become Great Open Door's Secretary. Davina was formerly an accomplished assembly team member before qualifying as a primary school teacher, and also brings valuable educational experience to the ministry.

Ron Kingsmill's appointment as a trustee was renewed for three years from 4th October 2022.

Safeguarding

Miss Sarah Mitchell's, our newly appointed Safeguarding Trustee, recommended that there should be a greater emphasis on sharing our safeguarding procedures. The Trustees agreed to implement these recommendations to ensure that the importance of safeguarding is highlighted during and throughout the recruitment process.

Sound System

The Great Open Door sound system has given many years of faithful service, but more recently has shown its age and has been letting the team down. Having suffered a number of PA problems, blighting otherwise excellent assembly performances, the Trustees decided to upgrade the sound system and have spent £2,498 in the past year replacing six aging mics with modern high quality Wi-Fi radio mics and attendant headsets, etc. These mics have improved the reliability and sound quality of the system.

The Trustees anticipate making further improvements to the sound system next year including professionally racking the Wi-Fi mics. Supporters will be asked to consider donating to the costs of further upgrading the sound system.

Website

The Trustees wish to thank Barry Wales, who redesigned the website, for his ongoing help and advice. The Trustees are also grateful to Harefield Church who continue to pay the website maintenance costs on behalf of the ministry.

Great Open Door's online resources can be easily accessed via

<https://greatopendoor.org.uk/online-resources/>

Prayer

The Trustees sought to strengthen the prayer foundation of the ministry and were delighted with the success of the first "Soak in" prayer event which ran at Harefield Church on Education Sunday, 11th September 2022. The afternoon had specific prayer requests for participants to engage in through various creative prayer stations. The "Soak in" was well attended and the Trustees are thankful to Jo Hargrave and Paul Welfare for organizing this event so well.

Since October 2022 weekly 'Pause for Prayer' emails have been sent to supporters as part of our long-term strategy to build on the prayer foundation.

The aim of these brief focused prayer bulletins is to increase contact with supporters by encouraging the desire to pray for Great Open Door's schools ministry and also to support Christian teachers in schools. A list has been started of contacts at individual churches who have offered to feed Great Open Door into regular church prayer requests.

The Trustees are thankful to everyone who has supported the ministry in prayer.

Mission Partner

Great Open Door is a Local Mission Partner of Scripture Union. This provides the ministry opportunities for networking and offers training and resources in various aspects of youth and children's work.

Heart 4 Harlow

The Trustees are grateful for the work of the Arts, Culture and Education (ACE's) Group at Heart 4 Harlow and for their enthusiastic support and endorsement of our ministry.

During the year Jo Hargrave has been liaising with churches (i.e., Harlow Baptist Church, Potter Street Baptist Church, Harefield Church and St Andrews Church) with the aim of developing long term strategic partnerships between churches and schools. Churches within Heart for Harlow have been compared with the spread of schools looking for church/school links, looking at best practice and searching for Christian links within schools we don't currently visit. The aim is for Great Open Door to benefit from local links and also encourage churches to prayerfully build links with the ministry and with their local schools.

The team delivered two Fun Days in June 2022, one at Gateway Church and the other Harlow Baptist Church. Both produced invitations to speak to the church congregations in the autumn. Great Open Door's work was show-cased at three

services in two churches, namely Lighthouse in April 2022 and February 2023 and at Harlow Baptist Church in October. A new team member, Tina Liu, has subsequently joined Great Open Door from Lighthouse Church as a direct result of these church visits.

LEGAL & ADMINISTRATIVE INFORMATION

Registered charity name Great Open Door

Registered charity number: 1169471

The Trustees who served the charity during the period and since the year end were as follows:

P Gray
R Kingsmill
T West (Resigned 20th April 2022)
S Mitchell (Appointed 29 July 2023)
D Smith (Appointed 29 July 2023)

Registered Office: 3 Thurstans
Harlow
Essex
CM19 4RS

Bankers: Lloyds Bank Plc
25 Gresham Street
London
EC2V 7HN

Approved by the Trustees and signed on their behalf by

P.Gray
Phil Gray
Trustee

7th August 2023

FINANCIAL REPORT

The Trustees present their Income and Expenditure Account for the year under review and the Statement of Assets and Liabilities as at 31 March 2023. The Trustees do not consider it necessary to have an independent examiner's report as the income of the charity is below the £25,000 threshold to require this and the financial activities are very straightforward.

Income for the period under review was £8,424 and expenditure on charitable activities was £9429 leaving cash funds of £5315 at the year end. Charitable expenditure increased by £2542 in the year, mainly due to the cost of six new Wi-Fi radio microphones which has greatly improved the reliability and sound quality of the portable PA system.

We are grateful to the churches, individuals and trusts who have supported the ministry and who continue to fund our work.

Total assets amounted to £8,015 including the estimated value of the portable sound system (£2,500) and puppets and props (£200) many of which were gifted to the charity. The Trustees are grateful for all the goods and services donated to the charity.

During the period under review Great Open Door acted as the custodian of the cash funds of Puppets Galore, a Christian schools work charity with similar objects and values to Great Open Door. At 31st March 2023 Puppets Galore's cash funds amounted to £ 1,078.

There were no outstanding liabilities on 31st March 2023.

FINANCIAL REPORT

INCOME AND EXPENDITURE

12 months ended 31 March 2023

		2022
	Year £	Year £
Income from Charitable Activities		
Donations		
Churches	1,075	600
Individuals	7,284	5,469
Gift Aid	65	1,321
S W Buckhurst Trust		1,000
Total	8,424	8,390
Expenditure on Charitable Activities		
Subcontractor Services	6,404	4,960
Assemblies & Lessons	241	124
Sound System	2,498	28
Insurance	261	256
Prayer	25	
Travelling Expenses		60
Training		259
Donations		1,200
Total	9,429	6,887
Excess of Income/- Expenditure	-	1,503
Cash Funds at 31 March 2022/31 March 2021	6,320	4,817
Excess of Income/- Expenditure	1,005	1503
Cash Funds at 31 March 2023/31 March 2022	£5,315	6,320

FINANCIAL REPORT

STATEMENT OF ASSETS AND LIABILITIES

As at 31 March 2023

Assets	£	£
Cash Funds		
Unrestricted Funds		5,315
Donated Items at Valuation		
Sound and PA Equipment	2,500	
Puppets and Props	200	
		2,700
Total Assets		£8,015